

# **Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project Environmental Impact Statement and Environmental Impact Report**

## **Open House Summary Report**

**Rancho Cordova, California**

**US Department of the Interior  
Bureau of Reclamation**

**California Department of Fish and  
Game**

**February 2011**





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Draft EIS/EIR Public Involvement Materials

# Acronyms

Acronym	Full Phrase
CCAO	Central California Area Office
CCR	California Code of Regulations
CDFG	California Department of Fish and Game
CEQA	California Environmental Quality Act
CFR	Code of Federal Regulations
DWR	Department of Water Resources
EIR	environmental impact report
EIS	environmental impact statement
HQ	headquarters
NEPA	National Environmental Policy Act
NOA	notice of availability
NOC	notice of completion
NOI	notice of intent
NOP	notice of preparation
USC	United States Code

# 1. Introduction

The United States Department of the Interior, Bureau of Reclamation (Reclamation), and the California Department of Fish and Game (CDFG) have prepared an environmental impact statement/environmental impact report (EIS/EIR). This joint document addresses the environmental effects of the proposed removal or replacement of a fish diversion weir at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery in Rancho Cordova, Sacramento County, California. The Hatchery is on the lower American River, approximately a quarter-mile downstream of Nimbus Dam. The Hatchery was built as mitigation for the construction of Nimbus Dam, which blocked the spawning areas for chinook salmon (*Oncorhynchus tshawytscha*) and Central Valley steelhead trout (*O. mykiss*). The proposed project would create and maintain a reliable system for collecting adult fish to allow Reclamation to remain in compliance with mitigation obligations for spawning areas blocked by Nimbus Dam, while adequately protecting chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead trout.

## 1.1 Overview of the Public Involvement Process

Reclamation and the CDFG have prepared the EIS/EIR in accordance with the National Environmental Policy Act (NEPA) of 1969, 42 United States Code (USC), Section 4321 et seq.; the Council on Environmental Quality regulations for implementing NEPA, 40 Code of Federal Regulations (CFR), Parts 1500-1508; the California Environmental Quality Act (CEQA) of 1970, California Public Resources Code, Section 21000 et seq., as amended; the Guidelines for Implementation of CEQA, Title 14, California Code of Regulations (CCR), Section 15000 et seq.; and Reclamation and CDFG guidelines. Reclamation is the NEPA lead agency and the CDFG is the CEQA lead agency.

The lead agencies provide opportunities for the public to participate in the NEPA/CEQA environmental analysis process to promote open communication and better decision making. Under NEPA, guidance for implementing public involvement is codified in 40 CFR, Section 1501, Part 7, thereby ensuring that federal agencies make a diligent effort to involve the public in preparing NEPA documents. Under CEQA, Sections 15200-15209 of the CEQA Guidelines contain guidance for public involvement.

All persons and organizations having a potential interest in the proposed action and alternatives, including minority, low-income, and Native American groups, are urged to participate in the NEPA/CEQA process. Formal opportunities for public involvement are initiated by the publication of the notice of intent (NOI) and notice of preparation (NOP), the draft EIS/EIR notice of availability (NOA) and notice of completion (NOC), and the final EIS/EIR NOA and NOC.

At the initiation of an EIS/EIR, the lead agencies issue an NOI and an NOP to start the project scoping period. The NOI, which is required by NEPA, is published in the *Federal Register*; the NOP, which is required by CEQA, is submitted to the State Clearinghouse. Notices of public scoping meetings are published in local newspapers and are mailed to interested persons and organizations.

Following internal review, the lead agencies finalize and issue a draft EIS/EIR. Reclamation and the US Environmental Protection Agency publish individual NOAs in the *Federal Register*, in accordance with NEPA, and the CDFG submits an NOC to the State Clearinghouse, in accordance with CEQA. Notices are also published in local newspapers. In addition, copies of the draft EIS/EIR are mailed to individuals, organizations, Native American tribes, and government agencies that request copies. Notices of public meetings on the draft EIS/EIR are published in local newspapers and are mailed to interested persons and organizations.

After responding to public comments on the draft EIS/EIR, the lead agencies issue a final EIS/EIR. Both the Environmental Protection Agency and Reclamation publish NOAs in the *Federal Register* and the CDFG submits an NOC to the State Clearinghouse. Notices are published in local newspapers, and copies of the final EIS/EIR are provided to local libraries and are mailed to those who request copies.

The purpose of this report is to review and summarize written comments received from the public during and following the draft EIS/EIR open house sessions held November 4, 2010. Input provided during the public comment period, which extended from October 1 through November 30, 2010, will allow Reclamation and the CDFG to further refine the alternatives presented in the draft EIS/EIR and if necessary, to revise the analysis of impacts on resources.

## **1.2 Description of the Public Involvement Process to Date**

In December 2003, Reclamation held two public scoping meetings as part of an environmental assessment for the then-named Nimbus Fish Hatchery Weir Replacement Project. The high level of public input received from this outreach indicated that Reclamation would need to conduct an EIS/EIR to evaluate the environmental impact of project alternatives.

In April 2009, Reclamation launched a Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project website to serve as a clearinghouse for project information during the EIS/EIR process (<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/cao/hatchery/>). The website provides background information about the project, a project timeline, maps and photos of the planning area, and copies of public documents, such as the NOI and the draft EIS/EIR. The site also provides contact information for submitting comments and for obtaining further information about the project.

### Scoping

Reclamation published an NOI in the *Federal Register* on April 7, 2009, and the CDFG issued an NOP on April 9, 2009. This marked the start of a 45-day scoping period that began on April 7 and ended on May 28, 2009. Information about the public scoping meetings was also published in *The Folsom Telegraph* on April 15, 2009, and in *The Sacramento Bee* and *The Grapevine Independent* on April 17, 2009. A press release was issued on April 20, 2009, and a postcard announcing the public scoping meetings was mailed to approximately 164 potentially interested parties.

During the scoping period, the lead agencies hosted two public scoping meetings to share information about the project alternatives and to obtain input from the community. The meetings took place at the California State University, Sacramento Aquatic Center in Gold River, on April 30, 2009, from 1:00 to 3:00 PM and from 6:30 to 8:30 PM. Approximately 30 community and agency staff members attended the two meetings.

### Native American Consultation

Reclamation initiated consultation with Native Americans on February 16, 2010, as part of the National Historic Preservation Act Section 106 process. Letters requesting input and comment were sent to the Buena Vista Rancheria, Ione Band of Miwok Indians, Shingle Springs Band of Miwok Indians (Shingle Springs Rancheria), and the United Auburn Indian Community of the Auburn Rancheria (UAIC). At the time of this document's publication, Reclamation had received responses from the UAIC and the Shingle Springs Rancheria.

The UAIC responded by letter on March 10, 2010, that although they have concerns about the effects of development on their ancestral territory that could impact sites and landscapes that may be of cultural or religious significance, they have no comment regarding the proposed project. They asked to be contacted to provide input on the appropriate course of action in the event of an inadvertent discovery of prehistoric cultural resources or human burials during construction.

The Shingle Springs Rancheria, in coordination with an assigned Most Likely Descendant, Mr. John Tayaba, responded by letter on April 6, 2010, with a formal request to enter into consultations under Section 106 of the NHPA. The elevated archaeological potential of the project area and vicinity was noted. Reclamation met with representatives of Shingle Springs Rancheria on October 8, 2010. The tribal members stated their interest in preserving their heritage and asked they be contacted to provide input on the appropriate course of action in the event of an inadvertent discovery of prehistoric cultural resources or human burials during construction. They did not raise any specific concerns regarding project activities.

### Draft EIS/EIR

On October 1, 2010, Reclamation and the CDFG announced the availability of the draft EIS/EIR for formal public review and the planned public meetings. Reclamation and the

CDFG accepted written comments on the draft EIS/EIR from agencies, organizations, and individuals through November 30, 2010.

Reclamation and the CDFG used various media to announce the release of the draft EIS/EIR and to notify the public of the open house review sessions. Outreach methods included print and online media and telephone calls to individuals and agencies.

In addition to holding the draft EIS/EIR open houses, Reclamation and the CDFG used the following means to announce the comment period for the draft EIS/EIR:

- **Notice of Availability**—The formal public review process for the draft EIS/EIR began with publication of the NOA in the *Federal Register* on October 1, 2010, announcing the comment period, through November 30, 2010.
- **Project Website**—The draft EIS/EIR was made available and the open house sessions were announced via the project website (<http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/hatchery/>), which continues to be a reliable source of project information.
- **Press Releases and News Announcements**—Reclamation and the CDFG announced the open house sessions via press release on October 26, 2010. Reclamation e-mailed the press release regarding the open houses to 107 media sites, including newspapers. In addition, advertisements were published in *The Grapevine Independent* on October 29, 2010, and in the online edition of *The Fish Sniffer*, a forum for anglers and fishing enthusiasts that serves the Sacramento region, from October 25 through November 4, 2010.
- **Mailing List**—Reclamation and the CDFG compiled a list of 172 individuals, agencies, and organizations that have participated in past projects, that are known stakeholders for this project, or that requested to be on the mailing list. The agencies used this list to send postcards announcing the open house sessions and the availability of the draft EIS/EIR for public comment.
- **E-Mail Notification**—Following the postcard mailings, 96 individuals on the mailing list were sent a meeting reminder via e-mail; however, 32 of the 96 e-mails sent were undeliverable.
- **Telephone**—Individuals, agencies, and organizations identified as key project stakeholders and involved in previous project phases were notified of the open house sessions via telephone. Approximately 10 people were contacted via telephone, including members of various environmental, boating, and fishing organizations.

Additional outreach was conducted on Saturday, November 13, 2010, from 9:00 to 11:00 AM at Nimbus Shoals. Reclamation staff were present to inform anglers and other recreationists about the project, the draft EIS/EIR, and opportunities to comment on the project. They also distributed handouts containing information on the project alternatives. Reclamation communicated with approximately 20 members of the public during the two-hour session.

## **2. Meeting Overview**

The goal of the open house sessions was to obtain further public input on the alternatives that have been developed and analyzed in the draft EIS/EIR. In addition, Reclamation and the CDFG sought comments on potential impacts resulting from the project alternatives.

The meetings took place on November 4, 2010, at the Sacramento State Aquatic Center in Rancho Cordova from 2:00 to 3:30 PM and from 6:30 to 8:00 PM. Approximately 30 people attended the two sessions. The attendees included a mix of private citizens, nongovernment organization employees, and local, state, and federal employees.

The open houses were held on a Thursday afternoon and evening to accommodate various schedules, and both sessions followed an identical format. Three informational stations were set up around the perimeter of the meeting room to provide background on the project, the project alternatives, and visitor management options. David Robinson, (Project Manager for Reclamation), Joe Johnson (Project Manager for the CDFG), and other project team members discussed the project and answered attendees' questions about the project and the display materials at each station. No formal presentation was given. Each open house attendee was provided with a comment card and was encouraged to share written comments on the draft EIS/EIR. Written comments are summarized in this report.

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### 3. Comment Summary

The Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project Draft EIS/EIR public comment period ended on November 30, 2010. Twenty-four comments were received as of this date, and 16 late comments were received. All comments have been incorporated into this Draft EIS/EIR Open House Summary Report and will be considered in revising the draft EIS/EIR. The comments received and evaluated in this summary report will be considered in refining the alternatives, the affected environment, and impact evaluations.

The 40 comments received are broken down as follows:

- 7 during the open houses;
- 28 by mail/letter;
- 1 by telephone; and
- 4 by e-mail.

Submitted comments were assigned to the categories listed in Table 3-1. Some comments fit into several issue categories; where this occurred, the comment was counted only once and was placed in the issue category where it was most relevant. Twenty-three percent of the comments received focused on access to Nimbus Shoals and 15 percent focused on boating. General comments, primarily those stating a preference for a particular alternative, accounted for 33 percent of the comments received.

**Table 3-1  
Summary of Comments**

<b>Issue Category</b>	<b>Number of Individual Comments</b>	<b>Summary of Comments</b>
Biological resources	2	Support for removing dams to support native fish. Evaluate predation pressure from other fish and disease incidence.
Facilities	3	Concern over ability of fish ladder to attract fish and withstand flood flows. Desire for lighting on Nimbus Shoals that is compatible with other uses. Suggestions for modifying fish ladder design.
Land management	2	Request for explanation of whether side channel habitat project can be constructed concurrently with fish ladder. Concern over making public use decisions for Nimbus Shoals as part of this project.
Noise	1	Include more information to demonstrate noise shielding is impractical.
Public health and safety	1	Include more information about enforcement for fishing closure and public access restrictions.
Recreation—access	9	Support for limited and controlled access of Nimbus Shoals. Support for continued public access of Nimbus Shoals, including vehicle access. Request to consider availability of parking in making a decision about Nimbus Shoals visitor management. Suggestion to restrict vehicle access during spawning season. Suggestion to restrict access along the north side of the river.
Recreation— boating	6	Comments for kayak play area below Nimbus Dam. Correction of information provided on boating regulations. Support for ability to hand-launch boats from Nimbus Shoals in the future.
Recreation—fishing and fishing closures	3	Suggestions for modifying the fishing closure alternatives. Concerns over citation rates and enforcement at Nimbus Shoals.
General comments	13	Support for a particular alternative or actions under a given alternative.
<b>Total</b>	<b>40</b>	

## 4. Future Steps

### 4.1 Summary of Future Steps and Public Participation Opportunities

The goal of the Draft EIS/EIR Open House Summary Report is to summarize public input on the alternatives and analysis presented in the draft EIS/EIR. All comments and Reclamation's and CDFG's responses to comments will be included as an appendix to the final EIS/EIR. Using public input, Reclamation and the CDFG will revise the EIS/EIR and will publish a final EIS/EIR. The availability of the proposed document will be announced in the *Federal Register*, and a 30-day release will follow. In addition, the CDFG will submit an NOC to the State Clearinghouse. If necessary, Reclamation will publish a notice in the *Federal Register*, requesting comments on significant changes that were made as a result of comments received.

Following completion of the final EIS/EIR, the lead agencies will document their selection of an alternative and mitigation measures for implementation in the record of decision under NEPA and a notice of determination under CEQA.

All publications, including this report, project updates, and the draft and final EIS/EIR will be published on the project website, along with pertinent dates regarding solicitation of public comments.

### 4.2 Contact Information

The public is invited and encouraged to participate throughout the planning process for the EIS/EIR. Progress of the EIS/EIR may be viewed online at the official Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project website, at [www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/hatchery](http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/hatchery).

Interested parties may be added to the project mailing list to receive future mailings and information. Those wishing to be added to or deleted from the distribution list or requesting further information may contact Mr. David Robinson, Reclamation, at (916) 989-7179 or [HatchPass@usbr.gov](mailto:HatchPass@usbr.gov), or Mr. Joe Johnson, CDFG, at (916) 358-2943 or e-mail [jrjohnson@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:jrjohnson@dfg.ca.gov).

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**APPENDIX**

**DRAFT EIS/EIR PUBLIC INVOLVEMENT  
MATERIALS**



## **Appendix: Draft EIS/EIR Public Involvement Materials**

The following media were used to notify the public of the draft EIS/EIR open house sessions, to describe the project and draft alternatives, and to provide the opportunity to comment:

### Publicity:

- News release
- Notice on project website;
- Meeting flyer;

### Meeting materials:

- Project summary;
- Written summary of draft alternatives;
- Summary of visitor management options;
- Project schedule milestones; and
- Comment cards.

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Bureau of Reclamation  
Mid-Pacific Region



California Resources Agency  
Department of Fish & Game

MP-10-164

Media Contacts:

Reclamation: Pete Lucero, 916-978-5100, [plucero@mp.usbr.gov](mailto:plucero@mp.usbr.gov)

DFG: Harry Morse, 916-322-8962, [HMorse@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:HMorse@dfg.ca.gov)

For Release On: October 26, 2010

## Reclamation Schedules Two Public Open House Sessions on the Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project Draft EIS/EIR

The Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) will hold two public Open House sessions to provide information and receive comments on the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project (Project). The public is welcome any time during either of the two sessions to visit with staff members at information stations, ask questions, and provide comments:

**Thursday, November 4, 2010**

Afternoon Open House, 2-3:30 p.m. or Evening Open House, 6:30-8:00 p.m.

California State University Sacramento Aquatic Center

1901 Hazel Avenue, Gold River, CA 95670

Reclamation, the lead federal agency for the EIS under the National Environmental Policy Act, and DFG, the lead state agency for the EIR under the California Environmental Quality Act, released the Draft EIS/EIR on October 4, 2010. It identifies and evaluates three alternatives: (1) replace the existing weir with a new weir structure, (2) extend the fish ladder from the hatchery to the Nimbus Dam stilling basin, using the basin itself to hold and divert fish into the ladder, and (3) no action. With the second alternative, the existing weir would be permanently removed and DFG would assess potential changes in local fishing regulations.

The Nimbus Fish Hatchery is located along the lower American River, one quarter mile downstream from Nimbus Dam in Gold River. Reclamation built the hatchery in 1955 to mitigate for the loss of spawning habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead trout by the construction of Nimbus Dam; DFG operates and maintains the hatchery. The existing fish weir, which helps adult salmon enter the fish ladder, is aging, susceptible to damage from high flows, and requires annual flow reductions for maintenance activities.

The Draft EIS/EIR may be viewed at [http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa\\_projdetails.cfm?Project\\_ID=5216](http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=5216). Should you encounter problems accessing the document online, please call 916-978-5100 or e-mail [mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov](mailto:mppublicaffairs@usbr.gov). The Draft EIS/EIR may also be viewed at Reclamation's Central California Area Office (CCAO), 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630 or at the DFG Regional Office, 1701 Nimbus Road, Gold River, CA 95670.

Please mail written comments by Tuesday, November 30, 2010, to David Robinson, Bureau of Reclamation, CCAO, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630, or e-mail to [HatchPass@usbr.gov](mailto:HatchPass@usbr.gov), or fax to 916-989-7208. For more information, please contact Mr. Robinson at [HatchPass@usbr.gov](mailto:HatchPass@usbr.gov) or 916-989-7179 (TTY 916-989-7285), or Joe Johnson, DFG, at 916-358-2943 or [jrjohnson@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:jrjohnson@dfg.ca.gov), or visit the project website at [www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/hatchery](http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/hatchery).

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Reclamation is the largest wholesale water supplier and the second largest producer of hydroelectric power in the United States, with operations and facilities in the 17 Western States. Its facilities also provide substantial flood control, recreation, and fish and wildlife benefits. Visit our website at <http://www.usbr.gov>.



**Welcome to the  
Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project**

[Draft EIS/EIR Released.](#)

**Two Public Open House Sessions Scheduled.**

**Thursday, November 4, 2010.**

Afternoon Open House 2-3:30 p.m.

Evening Open House 6:30-8 p.m.

California State University Sacramento Aquatic Center,  
1901 Hazel Avenue, Gold River, CA 95670

[Map](#) [Print Comment Form](#)

- [Final NOA 9-15-10](#)
- [Schedule Milestones](#)
- [Project History](#)
- [Powerpoint](#) April 30, 2009



October 20, 2010

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[Mike Finnegan](#), Area Manager  
916-989-7200

[Janet Denes](#), Administrative Officer  
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For assistance or additional information about this website, please contact [Public Affairs](#)

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# Open House Sessions

## Scheduled for the Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project EIS/EIR



**The Bureau of Reclamation and the California Department of Fish and Game (DFG) have released the Draft Environmental Impact Statement/Environmental Impact Report (EIS/EIR) for the Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project (Project).**

The Draft EIS/EIR identifies and evaluates three alternatives: (1) extend the fish ladder from the hatchery to the Nimbus Dam still basin, using the basin itself to hold and divert fish into the ladder, (2)

replace the existing weir with a new weir structure, and (3) no action. With the first alternative, the existing weir would be permanently removed and DFG would assess potential changes in local fishing regulations.

Reclamation and DFG will hold two Open House sessions to provide project information and receive comments on the Draft EIS/EIR. The public is welcome any time during either of the two Open House sessions to visit information stations, ask questions, and provide comments.

The Nimbus Fish Hatchery is located along the lower American River, one quarter mile downstream from Nimbus Dam in Gold River, CA. Reclamation built the hatchery in 1955 to mitigate for the loss of spawning habitat for Chinook salmon and steelhead trout by the construction of Nimbus Dam; DFG operates and maintains the hatchery. The existing fish weir, which helps adult salmon enter the fish ladder, is aging, susceptible to damage from high flows, and requires annual flow reductions for maintenance activities.

The Draft EIS/EIR may be viewed at [http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa\\_projdetails.cfm?Project\\_ID=5216](http://www.usbr.gov/mp/nepa/nepa_projdetails.cfm?Project_ID=5216). If you encounter problems accessing the document online, please call 916-978-5100 or e-mail [mp-publicaffairs@usbr.gov](mailto:mp-publicaffairs@usbr.gov). The Draft EIS/EIR may also be viewed at Reclamation's Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630 or at the DFG Regional Office, 1701 Nimbus Road, Gold River, CA 95670.

Written comments will be accepted until close of business Tuesday, November 30, 2010, and should be sent to David Robinson, Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, 7794 Folsom Dam Road, Folsom, CA 95630, or e-mailed to [HatchPass@usbr.gov](mailto:HatchPass@usbr.gov), or faxed to 916-989-7208. For additional information, please contact Mr. Robinson at 916-989-7179 (TTY 916-989-7285) or e-mail [HatchPass@usbr.gov](mailto:HatchPass@usbr.gov), or Joe Johnson, DFG, at 916-358-2943 or e-mail [jrjohnson@dfg.ca.gov](mailto:jrjohnson@dfg.ca.gov), or visit the project website.

**THURSDAY**

**November 4, 2010**

**Afternoon Meeting 2:00 – 3:30 p.m.**

**Evening Meeting 6:30 – 8:00 p.m.**

**California State University, Sacramento**

**Aquatic Center**

**1901 Hazel Avenue, Gold River, California**

**[www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/hatchery](http://www.usbr.gov/mp/ccao/hatchery)**

# NIMBUS HATCHERY FISH PASSAGE PROJECT

## Project Summary

### ***What is the Project's Purpose?***

The project would create and maintain a reliable system for collecting adult fish at the Nimbus Fish Hatchery. This would allow Reclamation to remain in compliance with mitigation obligations for spawning areas blocked by the construction of Nimbus Dam, while adequately protecting chinook salmon and Central Valley steelhead trout.

### ***Who are the Lead Agencies?***

The project is a joint effort by the Bureau of Reclamation, Central California Area Office, and the California Department of Fish and Game.



### ***Why is the Project Needed?***

- ⇒ Damage and deterioration of weir structure:
  - Erodible foundation
  - Major repairs and modifications were required in 1963, 1965, 1982, 1986, and 1999
- ⇒ Operational impacts on sensitive fish species:
  - National Marine Fisheries Service requested long-term solution to minimize flow fluctuations
- ⇒ Public and worker safety concerns:
  - Installation and removal of weir
  - Debris accumulation
  - Boating hazard





## Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project Summary of Project Alternatives

**Purpose of the Project:** To create and maintain a reliable system of collecting adult fish for use in the Nimbus Hatchery.

**Need for the Project:**

- Meet hatchery mitigation goals
- Address damage and deterioration of weir structure
- Reduce operational impacts to sensitive species
- Address worker and public safety concerns

**The EIS/EIR considers the following alternatives:**

- Alternatives 1A and 1C—Modified fishway and removal of the diversion weir; fishing closures would vary under each of these alternatives as follows:
  - Alternative 1A—Fishing closure within 250 feet of the new fishway entrance
  - Alternative 1C—Fishing closure from the USGS Cable to Nimbus Dam
- Alternative 2—Replacement of the diversion weir
- No Action Alternative—Continuance of existing conditions

Reclamation is also considering three visitor management options for Nimbus Shoals that could be implemented under Alternative 1A, 1C, or 2. Currently, the public has full access to Nimbus Shoals from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM during the summer and from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM during the winter. The three alternative visitor management options for Nimbus Shoals are public vehicle access with defined parking, walk-in only access (no public vehicle access), and no public access.

Previous consideration was given to implementing Alternative 1 with a fishing closure from Nimbus Dam to the Hazel Avenue Bridge. This was presented at the public scoping meetings for this EIS/EIR as Alternative 1B. This alternative was eliminated from further analysis because of its similarity to Alternative 1C.

**Alternative 1A: Modified fishway and removal of the diversion weir with fishing closure within 250 feet of the new fishway entrance**

Alternative 1A involves the construction of a fishway from the Nimbus Fish Hatchery to the stilling basin below Nimbus Dam and removing the existing diversion weir. The fishway would consist of three sections: a concrete flume fishway, a pool and drop fish ladder, and a rock-lined trapezoidal channel. Two bridges across the fishway would provide continued access to the river. Construction and evaluation of the fishway is expected to take two years. The existing weir would be removed in the third year after experience with the operations of the new fishway is gained. Temporary construction impacts include closure of portions of the hatchery parking lot, re-routing of the American River Parkway bike trail, and restrictions on vehicle and foot traffic in the Nimbus Shoals area. Fishing would be closed year-round within 250 feet of the new fishway entrance as well as 250 feet within the hatchery outfall fishway; both of these closures are consistent with current Department of Fish and Game Code. In addition, a seasonal fishing closure from the USGS Cable to the Hazel Avenue Bridge from September 15 through December 31 would remain in effect, consistent with current Department of Fish and Game Code. Annual operations and maintenance

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(O&M) activities and cost would be similar or slightly increased compared to typical O&M of the existing weir.

**Alternative 1C: Modified fishway and removal of the diversion weir with fishing closure from the USGS Cable to Nimbus Dam**

Alternative 1C would be the same as Alternative 1A except for the fishing closure. Under Alternative 1C, a year-round fishing closure would extend from the USGS Cable to the Nimbus Dam.

**Alternative 2: Replace the diversion weir**

Alternative 2 involves replacing the diversion weir with a new diversion 750 foot long, 52 foot wide concrete weir immediately upstream of the existing diversion weir. This alternative would add additional entrances to the fish ladder and continue to use the majority of the existing ladder. Six 15 foot wide bypass bays would allow O&M without lowering river flow. This alternative would not allow adult fish passage. Construction would take two years and would result in temporary closure of portions of the hatchery parking lot. No changes in fishing regulations are associated with this alternative. Fishing would remain closed year-round within 250 feet of the fish ladder entrance as well as 250 feet within the hatchery outfall fishway. In addition, a seasonal fishing closure from the USGS Cable to the Hazel Avenue Bridge from September 15 through December 31 would remain in effect. O&M activities and cost would increase compared to typical O&M of the existing weir.

**No Action Alternative**

The no action alternative continues using the diversion weir. Annual river flow reductions would be required seasonally to install and remove the weir superstructure and as necessary for O&M. Flows over 50,000 cubic feet per second and flood events would likely cause major damage to the weir foundation and superstructure; replacement would eventually be necessary. No changes in fishing regulations are associated with this alternative. Fishing would remain closed year-round within 250 feet of the fish ladder entrance as well as 250 feet within the hatchery outfall fishway. In addition, a seasonal fishing closure from the USGS Cable to the Hazel Avenue Bridge from September 15 through December 31 would remain in effect. Annual operations and maintenance (O&M) activities and cost would be similar or slightly increased compared to typical O&M of the existing weir.

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# NIMBUS HATCHERY FISH PASSAGE PROJECT

## Visitor Management Options for Nimbus Shoals



The area between Hazel Avenue and the Nimbus Dam is known as Nimbus Shoals. The public has full access to Nimbus Shoals from 6:00 AM to 9:00 PM during the summer and from 7:00 AM to 7:00 PM during the winter. Nimbus Shoals is heavily used by anglers. Vehicles are not restricted in the shoals area, and anglers can drive to the edge of the river and fish from their vehicles, which is attractive because it eliminates the need to haul gear. In the draft EIS/EIR, at the programmatic level, Reclamation is considering three alternatives to public access.

### ***Public Vehicle Access with Defined Parking***

The public would access Nimbus Shoals by vehicle or by nonmotorized means but would not be able to drive to the water's edge. Barriers would be placed between the main parking area and the shoals. Visitor amenities may include picnic tables, portable toilets, and trash cans.



### ***Walk-In Only Access (No Public Vehicles)***

The public would have access during established hours by nonmotorized means, such as on foot or on bicycle. The public could park without charge at the hatchery to access Nimbus Shoals. Walk-in access would be provided via a foot gate. Visitor amenities may include picnic tables, portable toilets, and trash cans.

### ***No Public Access***

All access to Nimbus Shoals would be prohibited and the area would be fenced. Public access to the north bank of the lower American River would not be affected, but the north bank is fenced because it is very steep, and access is not sanctioned.

Under any of the above options, a Visitor Use Management Team would be designated to coordinate implementing the selected option and long-term management of visitors at Nimbus Shoals. The management team may include the California Department of Fish and Game, California Department of Parks and Recreation, Reclamation, and other agencies or entities not specifically mentioned here.

### ***Why is Reclamation Considering These Visitor Management Options?***

Reclamation is considering visitor management options to address environmental and public safety concerns associated with recreation use of Nimbus Shoals, which contributes to erosion and water quality degradation from dropping lead sinkers, driving and parking near the river's edge, and using off-road vehicles.

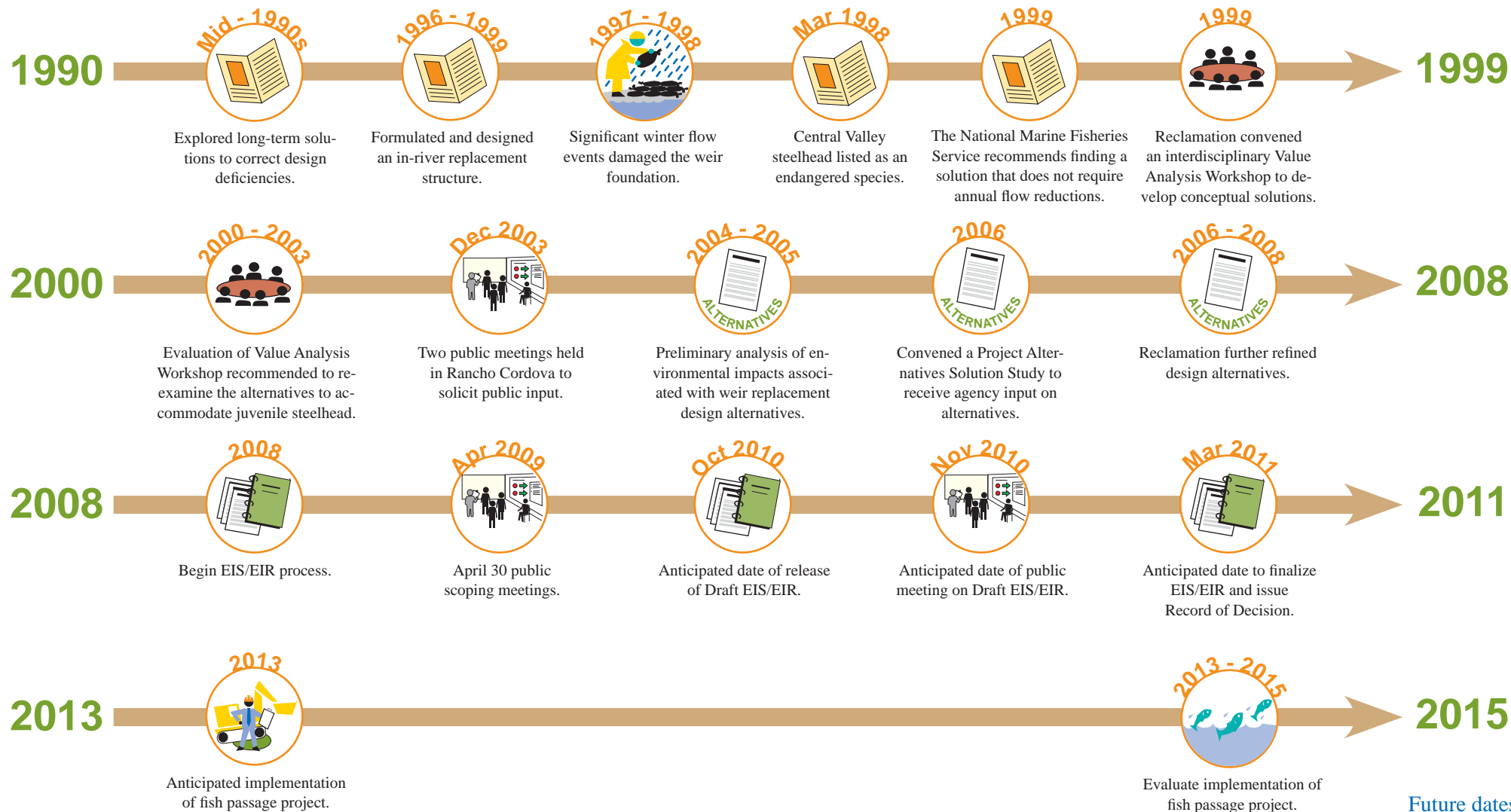
There is also a risk of flooding at Nimbus Shoals. The amount of water released from Nimbus Dam is sometimes sufficient to inundate the low-lying Nimbus Shoals. Although a warning siren is sounded before such releases, recreationists at Nimbus Shoals do not always vacate the area and could be injured or killed.

Other issues associated with visitor use of the Shoals are illegal boat launching and fishing, trash accumulation, vandalism, and vehicle break-ins.



# Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project

## Schedule Milestones



Future dates are estimates.



## Nimbus Hatchery Fish Passage Project Comment Form for Draft EIS/EIR

Please provide written comments on the draft EIS/EIR using this form (attach additional sheets if necessary). This form may be left at the meeting registration table or mailed, e-mailed, or faxed using the contact information provided below.

Including your contact information is optional. Before including your name, address, phone number, e-mail address, or other personal identifying information in your comment, you should be aware that your entire comment—including your personal identifying information—may be made publicly available at any time. While you can ask us in your comment to withhold your personal identifying information from public review, we cannot guarantee that we will be able to do so.

**Comment forms will be accepted until close of business on Tuesday, November 30, 2010.**

### Contact Information (*Optional*)

Name: \_\_\_\_\_

Organization/Affiliation: \_\_\_\_\_

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